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ABSTRACT

An ethnographic sketch of a small, Midwestern, middle-class American community emphasizes the shared value system, the derived code of conduct and an analysis of the three levels of social interaction and their respective functions. Data were gathered over a two-year period of field work, including ten months of intensive observation of the town, a quiet, semi-rural, racially unmixed community of about 1200, with a strong Christian orientation. The community's values have given rise to a moral order that implies a basically Christian code of conduct consisting of four major principles of prescribed behavior: Fairness, Control, Doing Good Deeds, and Doing One's Best. These principles are inviolate and the high degree of social conformity in itself controls and maintains the moral order. The code is not, however, synonymous with the community's actual behavior which exists on three levels: the non-emotional, overt personal interaction level where appearances are everything, the illusion of strong social cohesion is fostered, and conflict is minimized; the covert level, e.g., gossip, where transgressions are aired; and the intimate level, where a person can "be himself". The town is described geographically, politically, economically, and philosphically in terms of its values. (SB)

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THE VALUE SYSTEM, CODE FOR CONDUCT AND LEVELS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION IN A MIDWESTERN MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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The following ethnographic sketch of a small, midwestern, middle-class American community ("Bachdorf" -- a pseudonym) places emphasis on the community's shared value system, the derived code for conduct, as well as an analysis of three levels of social interaction and their respective functions. An attempt is made to link cultural values, operating on a cognitive level, with actual behavior.

Data were gathered over a period of two years of ethnographic fieldwork, ten months of which was spent in intensive participant observation in the community.

The Community Setting

Bachdorf is a middle-class semi-rural town located in a large midwestern state. In 1970 the U.S. Census reported the population to be 1,232. Since that time the community has grown to well over 1,400 people.

Bachdorf lies on the flat plain along what was once the transition zone between woodland and prairie. The settlement originated where a creek intersects the north-south railroad line, which still bisects Bachdorf, although the trains no longer stop there. The town is further divided by two state highways which intersect in the business center, a district consisting of several blocks of brick and concrete offices, shops and restaurants.

The north-south state road connects Bachdorf with a moderate-sized city ten miles to the south, and a smaller city approximately fifteen miles to the north. With exception of the creek which skirts the southwestern edge of town, the surrounding landscape consists of level terrain of corn and bean fields.

Bachdorf is small by urban standards. Socially, politically and ideologically it is a traditional and conservative middle-class community. There seems

to be little concern for national politics, although the people support the Republican Party, as they have done for decades. Concern for local politics noticably arises only when something fails to run smoothly. Then "there ought to be a law" to deal with whatever the difficulty is. Internal political affairs are directed by a five-member elected town board. Each member resides in one of the community's five wards. Competition for these positions is minimal and they are usually awarded to a socially prominent male who is believed to be of sound character and judgement.

During pleasant weather one is able to cover the entire length of Bachdorf in ten minutes of brisk walking. Except for the small business district, the community consists of residential streets. The original residential areas surround the business district. This is where the "oldtowners"[1] live. These are the families that have lived in Bachdorf for at least two generations. The "newtowners" (of which there are over 200 now) live in the new sub-divisions of prefabricated homes and curbless streets on the north and south edges of town.

The old residential areas are lined with large deciduous trees that bow into the streets. Here old but well maintained brick and frame houses hide behind the greenery. Grassy backyards abound in this part of town, and the gravelled alleys behind the yards are always devoid of trash and broken glass.

Large porches run the entire length of houses and often curve around to the sides as well. They would be an ideal place to sit and talk and watch the neighbors stroll by, but this rarely happens. The porches are not used as the urban "stoop" is for socializing. Porches provide a place to deposit golashes and umbrellas (for it rains heavily here in the spring), but are not a place for people. Bachdorf is not a street culture. Even on the mildest,

sunniest Saturday afternoons one has to search hard to find a pedestrian on the street. Only children are occasionally found at play in their yards or at a neighbor's. They do not roam the community in aggregates.

Small groups of adolescents "hang out" around the pin-ball palace or at the local pizzeria downtown. Those old enough to drive cruise the main street in their customized recent-make vehicles. Adults and the elderly are not seen frequently on the streets. When they go anywhere, even if it is only to the other side of town or to church, most will drive. Large eight-cylinder cars are the rule, although the tendency is to steer away from the high status brand-names. Oldtowners will avoid "making a spectacle" of themselves at all cost. Dignity, self-respect and a strong sense of privacy are the recurrent self-labels.

At night the streets of Bachdorf become quieter still. Anyone roaming about comes under suspicion of being "up to no good." The local town marshall, under town board jurisdiction, periodically checks the streets and especially those "potential trouble spots" such as the filling station that caters to the young crowd with motorcycles. There is no major crime in Bachdorf, only an occasional incident of teenage vandalism. The inhabitants of the town are proud of Bachdorf's clean slate, and conscious effort is made to keep up the good appearance that is revealed to outsiders.

Two-thirds of the working residents of Bachdorf commute to either nearby city for their livelihood. There industry and business supports a large labor force and these job opportunities are lacking in Bachdorf. Local business and industry is limited and supports only a small percentage of the town population. Local businesses tend to be family owned and operated, thus nepotism is frequent. Except for the local bank, real estate offices, drugstore, a limited production factory, small stores, restaurants and an auto dealer,

business is aimed at the farming industry, supplying the surrounding farmers' needs for grain, feed and equipment.

For the oldtowners, ties with the city are primarily economic and not social. But for the newtowners who have moved to Bachdorf from other communities in the state, as well as from states to the south to seek employment in the nearby cities' industries, this tie is social as well.

The oldtowners see themselves as a part of Bachdorf. They are Bachdorf. They are interrelated socially through a very intricate, overlapping kinship network. Many families are related through marriage, and everyone knows everyone else. The oldtowners go to the city to work, but, for the most part, they return to Bachdorf where they are socially self-sufficient. These interrelated families and their friends live in the heart of residential Bachdorf, as well as on the outlying farms. The newtowners on the other hand live on the edges of town and regard Bachdorf as a bedroom community -- a place to sleep rather than to live. Their social lives revolve around their jobs in the city.

The in-group, out-group distinction is quite strong in this town. The oldtowners feel ambivalent toward the newtowners, and vice versa. The socially prominent families are always oldtowners. They are in control of the social, political and economic resources of the community. They hold the power.[2] The newtowners are encroaching on these resources and may be becoming a potential threat to the establishment. Perhaps what is threatening to the oldtowners is the slight value and culture difference that exists between themselves and these young people from the south and elsewhere. But this is often overlooked if the newcomers are "work-minded" and success-achievement oriented so that they are self-sufficient and a "credit to the community." Adherence to the success-achievment orientation seems to be one of the main criteria for social

acceptance.

The oldtowners must acknowledge the one benefit of this influx of new residents. Unlike many small rural towns in the midwest, Bachdorf is growing in size, rather than becoming a ghost town. This is because of its nearness to urban industry. But this is an ambivalent consolation to the oldtowners, who also realize that within a few decades they will probably be replaced or absorbed by this new order.

The town, as well as the county around it is racially unmixed. The community is predominantly White Anglo Saxon Protestant, although a small percentage of Catholics resides here as well. The people of Bachdorf have a solid grasp on their faith, and generally consider themselves to be strongly religious. There are three Protestant churches in town and one just south of town. The small constituency of Catholics commutes to a church in another community.

Almost everyone in Bachdorf belongs to a church, although membership does not reflect church attendance. The three churches appear to be socially stratified, one catering to the socially prominent familes (Federated), one to the average-income family (Methodist), and one that draws its membership from the less prominent segment of Bachdorf, along with many newtowners from the south (Pentecostal). It is interesting to note that the degree of zeal and emotional involvement in church services at these three churches seems to be inversely related to the socio-economic level of the participants. There are numerous organized church activities, some of which are shared by the Federated and Methodist denominations. The Pentecostals are not included in these, just as many newtowners are not included in the social matrix of the town.

There is, however, an activity focus where everyone in Bachdorf is drawn into the same social sphere. The area high school (located in town)

provides the largest single social focus for the community. Parents from all over town are brought together through their children. The high school sports activities provide the nexus for establishing social ties not based on kinship.

In addition to the school-related activities, there are over fifty voluntary clubs and associations in town which differ in membership criteria, size and function. Clubs that do not draw sufficient followings dissolve, so that the ones that have survived over the years are attended regularly by their old and new recruits. If one goes about to set up a social calendar for all the meetings of established clubs and events for one year, one could easily find something to attend at least once a day for every day of the year, except holidays and the slack month of August, which is the accepted vacation month. What most of these clubs have in common is some altruistic purpose -- that is to help others, or to perform a service and be productive in some socially acknowledged and reinforced manner. That is not to preclude that these activities cannot be enjoyable at the same time, but for very few events is "fun" proclaimed to be the primary purpose.

The Moral Order

Bachdorfians see the universe as a moral place, and they view themselves, and man in general, as guardian of that morality. All around them there exist threats to that moral order, from without and from within the larger society. They point to the increasing secularization of society, the abuse of drugs by young people, the recent episodes of corruption in national government, the influx of sex education programs in the schools, crime and violence on city streets and in the mass media as indicators of the slow but steady decay of this nations's moral fibre. The threat of communist infiltration

and takeover is blamed by some. Others believe increased urbanization with its crowding of large numbers of people into a small area is a cause. The insidious influences of the city are very imminent to Bachdorfians, since they are located not far from smaller urban centers.

These people of rural backgroung now perceive themselves having to fight to preserve their lifeway. The accepted means for defending oneself and the community way of life from this encroaching moral entropy is to adhere tenaciously to the existing moral order. Bachdorfians believe this order helped found settlements on the frontier, helped see the community and the country through two World Wars and the Great Depression. It is a focal point of the traditionalism and conservatism of middle-class culture, and its roots are found in the values of Christian doctrine.

Bachdorf is a strongly Christian community. Those few inhabitants who do not feel themselves to be Christians nonetheless adhere to the basic values which derive from this doctrine.

The moral order is an implicit code for conduct. It is basically of a divine nature and rests on the Christian concepts of "righteousness" and "goodness." Righteousness is based on a person having accepted Jesus as his personal Savior and thereby having accepted the correct way of behaving (socially, morally, religiously) in all situations. Goodness is based on Christ-like behavior and could simply be described as living the Golden Rule ("Do onto others as you would have them do onto you").

This moral order may be broken down into four components: 1) the principle of fairness, 2) the principle of control, 3) the principle of doing good deeds, and 4) the principle of doing one's best.

Principle of Fairness

The principle of fairness to oneself and others is directly derived from the Golden Rule. It is also the outgrowth of the egalitarian principle (i.e., "All men are created to have an equal right to fulfill their God-given potential"). These concepts rest on the assumption that man has the inherent potential to be and do good, and if treated with kindness and love, this natural goodness will germinate and grow. However, man is also the product of his environment and hence an improper environment may induce man to do evil. Therefore if a person is a stranger, his past and intentions unknown, one is regarded wise to treat him with caution and even suspicion. This creates an apparent paradox in that man is inherently good, but since he is also a product of his environment, man needs to be controlled so that his inherent goodness may surface.

The principle of fairness extends into all spheres of interaction: business, work, play, school, family and friends. It implies a respect for the equal rights of others and covers extentions of others, such as their property and privacy. A salient corollary to the principle of fairness is the ideal of economic self-reliance (Hsu 1961:216-22). An individual or family should be self-supporting so as not to be a burden to others, hence placing unfair demands on them.[3]

Principle of Control

The principle of control says that man needs laws, rules and regulations in order to live peacefully in society. Society can only exist when the individuals that comprise it share and adhere to a code for conduct, a "right way" to act and think. The "right way" is, of course, to follow the principle of fairness in all aspects of life. In a sense, the principle of control is a validation and justification for fairness.

According to Bachdorfians, the controls for behavior should be learned during childhood. They are the essential aspects of socialization. Here the family plays the crucial role in socialization. The existing traditional family structure of the "male as breadwinner" and the "female as homemaker" is in principle recognized as almost inviolate. It is the role of the parents, rather than educators and legislators to set the values for their children. It is felt that the parents alone reserve the God-given right to inculcate their values and beliefs in their children. Children must be taught to fear God, respect their fellows and adhere to the existing moral order. This preservation of the existing and accepted way of life is the essence of family rights and privacy.

Children as well as adults should be guided to "act right" toward their fellows. Implicit also in the idea of control is that controls, in theory anyway, should apply equally to everyone.

In every society there is a range of behavior that is considered appropriate for every situation. The extent of this range will very depending on the status of the actor and on the situation in which he is to act. Transgressions of the fairnecs principle will have different repercussions depending on who does the transgressing. If a socially prominent person commits a public breach of fairness, he is not as severely reprimanded since he has the buffer of an upstanding reputation. Reprimands and negative sanctions, unless they are of a legal stature, will become manifest in ridicule and ostracism. Unless an offense is of major dimensions, these sanctions are not incurred directly (face-to-face) but rather through the "indirect communications network," referred to as gossip. Because of the closeness and interrelatedness of the community, this network is swift and far-reaching, and operates as a social control for behavior by invoking both shame and

guilt in the offender.

One of the controls that safeguards the principle of fairness and the moral code in general is the injunction not to probe too deeply into issues that surround the value system. The values and the code are, in fact, inviolate. Their truth is beyond mortal verification and question. They are accepted "givens" and it is futile to probe them or to ask too many whys. Such questions eventually lead to their basis in the Divine Order of things. Metaphysical concerns are not an appropriate topic for discussion in middle-class American culture. The fear of change is strong, and questioning or evaluating the value system sets an atmosphere where change becomes a possibility.

The strength of social control can be seen in the degree of social conformity that is apparent in Bachdorf. Social conformity operates through the aid of the "indirect communications network" and also in face-to-face situations, where validation of behavior, ideas and attitudes occurs through the consensus of the group. I witnessed no emotionally laden arguments while in Bachdorf. Nor did I witness anyone promoting an idea publicly that everyone else in the immediate face-to-face group did not agree to. It appeared that the ideas and statements made were weighed carefully before hand so that they would meet with agreement. The adage, "You're either wi' us or agin' us," is very applicable in this case. There exists a lack of value relativity in Bachdorf, and this is understandable.[4] If more than one value system and moral order could be "right" then what can be said about the indisputable validity of the existing one? Ethnocentrism functions to promote internal validation and cohesion in both the value system and in people's behavior.

Principle of Doing Good Deeds

The principle of doing good deeds is another important component of the moral code. This principle is also derived from Christian doctrine, since a person who has accepted Christ is not only a "good" and "righteous" person, but also one who does things that benefit others. There is virtue in giving of oneself -- especially in terms of time and activity -- for the betterment of other people. Good deeds can include a variety of activities and it is not the activity and its product that is virtuous so much as its apparent altruistic intent.[5] Altruism is tied to the concept of self-sacrifice, and Parsons, et al. (1973) have pointed out that the notion of sacrifice is a reciprocation of God's "gift of life" and His gift of the life of his only begotten Son. God gives us life and we in turn "give of ourselves" through service to our fellow man, and this shall please God.

The concept of good deeds may explain the existence of the numerous service oriented clubs and organizations in Bachdorf. One of the greatest compliments that can be paid someone from this community publicly is to acknowledge their activeness in and dedication to community organizations.

Principle of Doing One's Best

Closely related to good deeds is the principle of doing one's best, regardless of the task at hand. Here, again, importance is placed on apparent intentionality. If one does one's sincere best, i.e., does the right thing in accordance with the moral code in a given situation, then things should work out well. Chance may intervene and cause an unexpected or unwanted outcome, and if this happens eventhough the individual has truly "done his best," he is absolved of the responsibility of that outcome. The excuse of having done one's best could be perceived as a way of escaping the

responsibility for one's actions, and it is occasionally employed for just that end. However, this is not its intent. This principle is a way of bargaining with the moral order, in that if the code for behavior and apparent intention is followed, the individual has fulfilled his part of the contract. Then it is chance or unforseen circumstance that have fallen short of his expectations, rather than him having fallen short of meeting the community's expectations for correct deportment. Following the code leads to both smooth social interaction and harmonious compliance with the Divine Order of the Christian universe.[6]

Sometimes physical accidents happen and people in Bachdorf are injured or even killed. Such accidents are often attributed to someone not having done the correct thing in that situation. In a moral universe Bachdorfians believe that people, in the long run, will generally get what they deserve, and when a rule is broken (such as a traffic regulation) and injury and death result, the incident serves as a lesson of warning to others. It is not uncommon for the community to seek and find a moral in the incident, and this again supports and revalidates the necessity and importance of adhering to the proper code for conduct.

The moral code, which is a template for proper social conduct is not unrelated to the basic middle-class American value orientations of success-achievement and egalitarian-responsibility (Becker 1941:chap.1; Laski 1948:738; Williams 1960:414-70; Hsu 1961:216). In fact, the moral principles are an outgrowth of these basic value orientations. The principles of fairness and control are a direct reflection of egalitarianism, whereas the principles of good deeds and doing one's best derive from the success-achievement value orientation and the Work Ethic. It becomes apparent that the code for behavior

attempts to strike a balance between these value poles, which sometimes appear in conflict (Cuber and Harper 1948:369; Hsu 1961:209). Achievement and success are of great importance, yet the attainment of these goals is meaningless (or dubious at best) if they are not arrived at through fairness. In short, it is desirable to succeed but not at the apparent expense of others.

We see then that the moral code consists of prescriptions for conduct and it is the "front room," or public image that its adherents strive for. The code for proper conduct is derived from the cultural core value orientations. It is a cognitive frame of reference reflecting deeper shared values, and hence is not synonimous with behavior (see Figure 1). We now turn to the level of actual behavior and its relationship to the moral code.

The Public Fiction of Appearances

The code for "living right" does not always refer to actual behavior, but to the social illusion of living right. What is important at the level of overt personal interaction is the appearance of following the moral code. Principles of the code are breached all of the time, but this is not so bad if the transgressors can keep up the image of having conducted themselves properly. The greatest social faux pas is to flaunt a discretion and hence make a "spectacle of oneself."

Apparent righteousness and propriety are the "public fiction"[7] of mid-western, middle-class communities. When a misdeed can be ignored, that is, the transgressor does not flaunt his misconduct, then his social group has the option of pretending to be unaware of the deed, on the surface at least. In face-to-face public interaction, everyone has the option to chose to be blind to the breach. Furthermore, at this level of overt social interaction, the community will chose to do just that.[8] The behavior in the apparent,

face-to-face interaction is designed to promote the public image of everyone following the proper principles for deportment. Behavior at this level is designed to avoid emotional confrontation and obvious social conflict at all costs.

The overt level of social interaction is highly non-emotional and ritualized. It gives the observer a feeling of social harmony within a context of shallow interactional content. There are very few displays of anger, hatred, love or fear shown at this level. There is no apparent strong emotional content in these interactions. Substantive content of the interactions appears to be selected for its non-emotion evoking, non-controversial qualities. On the surface it appears that all social interactions in Bachdorf occur smoothly and without grating. At this level the community is a picture of harmony and social solidarity. This leads one to think that the emotional content that is repressed at the overt interactional level must find its expression elsewhere. And this seams to be the case.

The covert or indirect level of social interaction (gossip) provides such a vent for complaints about transgressors of the moral code. Gossip allows people to air their feelings without directly confronting the person who is the object of those feelings. Even at this level, feelings are still somewhat tempered and it is my impression that the full brunt of emotional discharge never reaches the overt or covert social levels at all. Bachdorfians are extremely reserved with emotional displays. Although some emotional discharge is allowed at the covert social level through gossip, much affect is retained within the individual. Perhaps this is where the intimate family relationships come into play. In this very private sphere an individual is free to "be himself," and since it is a privileged, private situation, the public fiction of a cool, austere and stoic countenance can be maintained.[9]

In short, three levels of social behavior can be abstracted for the people of Bachdorf. These are the overt social, covert social and intimate (family) social levels.

The non-emotionality involved in the overt socialinteraction level serves a necessary function. It minimizes apparent conflict between members of the community, and fosters at least the illusion of strong social cohesion. Viewed in this light, the apparent stoicism of midwestern, middle-class people has adaptive value. The historical adaptiveness of the public fiction of appearances rests on economic interdependence. Early in the last century when the midwestern prairie lands were being settled, groups of unrelated families bonded together to form small, isolated communities along the frontier. Contact between communities was somewhat limited due to geographic distance and slow transportation. Each settlement was therefore an economically independent unit which had to exploit the resources in its immediate surroundings in order to survive. This meant that the single family units within the settlement were to a large degree economically dependent on all other such units in their vicinity. Out of this mutual economic interdependence grew a social network based on mutual aid for survival along the frontier. Economic existence depended not only on one's own hard work and self-reliance, but also on the social ties with one's neighbors. Initially, personality traits of the people involved in this network must not have played a very important role. It was of minor concern whether individuals personally liked each other or not, since the bond between them was directly necessary for subsistence and survival. When survival is at stake, personal feelings become subordinate, and it is advantageous as well as adaptive to minimize overt emotional expression in the face-to-face public interaction network in order to attenuate within-group friction.

This cultural ecological account of the origin and adaptiveness of the public fiction of appearances may have been the general pioneer pattern for small rural communities in the midwestern frontier. Although economic interdependence is no longer as strong or as essential for survival in Bachdorf as it was it was over a century ago, the social-psychological behavior matrix still reflects this maintenance of overt interactional harmony.

Conclusion

A descriptive attempt has been made for this community to link core cultural values to actual behavior by means of a core-value derived code for conduct. Since this code is ideal, and human behavior rarely lives up to it completely, discrepancies become unavoidable between what "should be" and "what is." Such discrepancy between ideal and real behavior is minimized by the shared public fiction of appearances, which operates to reinforce the illusion that all is as it should be, at least on the overt, face-to-face level of interaction.

The less public covert and intimate levels of interaction act as a safety valve for the emotional discharge for the individual, who must compromise his own immediate desires with the necessary personal restrictions that are concomitant with belonging to a social group. The individual, whose immediate emotional responses are repressed at the direct, overt level of interaction, has to channel these feelings into other (indirect) social levels. Hence, emotional response, especially negative response, becomes indirect and at the face-to-face level, seemingly non-existent.

The fiction of appearances functions to maintain group solidarity by minimizing overt social strife. It was argued that 150 years ago this may have been a most adaptive pattern for interaction in an isolated frontier community, and this pattern has been retained to the present, as is evident in the community of Bachdorf.

NOTES

1. The labels of oldtowner and newtowner are mine. The people of Bachdorf do not use these labels, however, they do make a strong conscious distinction between these two groups.

2. Bachdorf is approaching the decline of its second dynasty of power holders. In the 1830's, Bachdorf was established by the settling of several large families. They expanded and grew through time, controlling the land and all that was on it until well after World War I. During the depression of the 1930's, the descendants of the founding families suffered severe financial losses. Large amounts of capital changed hands and a new power elite arose. These families are still in control, but their decline is imminent. They are the socially prominent families. Although money is respected, there is a certain reservation when money is discussed. Money is only a partial means to social prominence, and only when it has been acquired "fairly." The prime indicator of social respect and prominence is the length of residence in Bachdorf, and a solid reputation for "fairness."

3. The acceptance of charity is frowned upon by Bachdorfians, especially by the oldtowners. The giving of charity to outsiders (usually to people of a lower SES or different subculture, such as the urban ghetto Blacks), however, is quite acceptable. It is even regarded as a virtuous act. These recipients are not a part of the community and since they are defined as outsiders, they can be looked upon as less fortunate and even inferior without breaking the code of fairness within the community. To offer charity to a Bachdorfian, however, would be a grave insult to his sense of self-sufficiency and ambition.

4. The following is excerpted from my fieldnotes taken during a women's social club meeting. I selected this particular excerpt because the reaction pattern described is fairly typical for face-to-face group interactions for both sexes. This passage has not been edited:

> Posture is prim and almost rigid. Expressions and reactions to the discussion (in which I was not included but only listening) of ideas and events strongly tend toward extremism or just the opposite, that is, no noticable reaction at all. The extreme reactions are of a very opinionated nature: "Isn't that wonderfull!" or "Isn't that just awful!", with the tonal emphasis on the final adjective. Responses seem almost black and white — very few greys. Issues are reacted to as though they were all good or all bad. It seems as though the participants weigh each new item against the existing order and if they do not fit the value system, they are declared (and consensually validated) as "awful." If they agree with the system then they are declared as "wonderful."
>
> Opinions tend to be expressed only when there is consensual agreement as to their awfulness or wonderfulness. Topics of controversial content or opinions of a middle-range nature (and I know that these do exist, only are not expressed openly) are reacted to with uncomfortable silence — the apparent "I didn't really hear that..." Arguments are thus avoided. This seems to be crucial.

5. Many activities, especially church related ones, are attended as rote exercise. There seems to be little ego-involvement in the participating members. The virtue lies in the attendance and the appearance of having been there, rather than in the "giving of oneself" in terms of ego-involvement. This is especially true for Church missionary activities and the ritual of Summer Bible School, for both pupils and teachers.

6. This appears to be an excellent example of Durkheim's (1912) equation between the divine order and the social/moral order.

7. A "public fiction" is a collective adaptation to the necessities of overt social interaction. These necessities which have to do with interpersonal stress reduction are examined in historical perspective at the end of the section. The term is derived from Liebow's (1967) work on street corner society, where it is employed to describe an adaptive shared fallacy.

8. This seeming disregard for the obvious has been made explicit by Vidich and Bensman (1968:292-93) who write:

> One of the major modes of adjustment for the individual is to fail to see the problem at an explicit, conscious level and to repress from consciousness all those negative elements which intrude into personal activities and images. This does not mean, however, that the individual is unaware of the existence of the problems.
>
> At the level of action (as opposed to the level of consciousness) all the factors which make for the recognition of the problems are present in the actions of the individual even though there is never any need or occasion to discuss them...
>
> In some circumstances the members of the small community will even discuss these conditions of reality at an explicit level, but usually this occurs only when the relevance of reality is made in impersonalized terms and without reference to any specific individual, unless it be to an enemy or at the level of very confidential gossip...

9. Although I have little data on what happens within the private family setting, I believe that the public fiction carries through to this level as well, at least for the parent-child interaction. The illusion is frequently maintained "in front of the children." This is how children are socialized into the appropriate behavior patterns for the overt level of interaction. Between adults, confidents or spouses, however, the illusion is allowed to fall away and people can, in this limited instance at least, be themselves.

CORE CULTURAL VALUE ORIENTATIONS --->	MORAL ORDER CODE FOR CONDUCT	<---> ACTUAL BEHAVIOR
-success-achievement values -egalitarian-responsibility values	-principles of good deeds and doing one's best -principles of fairness and control	-levels of social interaction
-pervade middle-class American culture generally	-shared specifically by the community	1. overt social level (public fiction of appearances)
-usually not at a conscious level in the minds of the actors	-conscious and cognitive	2. covert social level (indirect communications network, i.e., gossip) 3. intimate social level (intra-family, between adults)

Figure 1

The Relationship Between Cultural Values, the Moral Code for Conduct and Actual Behavior

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